

CITY OF BELMONT

PLANNING COMMISSION

ACTION MINUTES

WEDNESDAY, JUNE 7, 2006 7:00 PM

C Parsons called the meeting to order at 7:01 pm., at One Twin Pines Lane, City Hall Council Chambers.

1. ROLL CALL

Commissioners Present: Parsons, Horton, Frautschi, Mayer, McKenzie, Mercer, Wozniak

Commissioners Absent: None

Staff Present: Community Development Director de Melo (CDD), Acting City

Attorney Noeske, (ACA), Recording Secretary Crouse (RS), Zoning Tech Gill (ZT).

2. AGENDA AMENDMENTS - None

3. COMMUNITY FORUM (Public Comments) - None

4. CONSENT CALENDAR - None

5. NEW BUSINESS

5A. Final Landscape Plan – 215 Hiller Street

ZT Gill summarized the staff report, recommending approval.

C Mercer asked about the surface between the shed and deck. ZT Gill responded that it was paving.

C Mercer asked about the height of the shed; the height of the fence; and that it appears the shed is showing off the property line. ZT Gill responded that the shed was 7 ft, 3 inches, and the fence 6 ft 11 inches and 6 ft 3 inches. CDD de Melo commented that the fence exceeds the height standard; the shed needs to get permitted and its location is fine.

Ray Brayer, Brayer Construction and Design/Applicant, was in attendance to respond to questions.

VC Horton asked about the crushed rock near the front door. Paul Williams, homeowner, responded that the crushed rock is for the porch swing and where it is too shady for anything to grow.

C Wozniak suggested adding a tree on the grass in the backyard for private space.

VC Horton expressed concern about the documentation as some things are not labeled. She asked about whether the crushed rock will be used for parking and stated that we asked for the paving to go away and now we have crushed rock.

C Mercer commented that there are lots of nice things about the landscaping. She suggested about planting another tree closer to the house to screen the bulk of the second story and how it would visually reduce the height of the house; need to soften the front porch; bring the fence into compliance.

C Mayer had no comments at this time.

C Frautschi commented how this is a sweet house and suggested planting a maple tree in the shady area where the applicant said they could find nothing to grow there. He commented how the hardscape makes water pool.

Chair Parsons commented that using river rock may work better than the crushed rock and that there was a need to take another look at the landscape plans.

There was a consensus of the Planning Commission to CONTINUE the final landscape plan as follow:

Fully document a landscape/irrigation plan with no new crushed rock

- **Bring fence into 6 ft height conformance**
- **Get shed permitted**
- **Shrubs in front of porch**
- **Modify the crushed rock to greenscape elements**
- **Add tree to the front yard**

5B. Final Landscape Plan – 1220 Avon Street

CDD de Melo summarized the staff report, recommending approval.

C Mercer asked about what is between the picket fence and the existing sidewalk.

C Mayer asked if these are acacia trees.

Aurelio Peccei, Coast to Coast Development/Applicant, was in attendance to respond to questions. However, he stated that the landscape architect was away at a conference and unable to attend the meeting. Landscape questions would need to be deferred to him at a later time.

Chair Parsons asked about the property line and stated that the fence was drawn in the wrong place; that the plans are not accurate/not complete.

There was a consensus of the Planning Commission to CONTINUE the final landscape plan as follow:

- **Return with landscape/ irrigation plan**
- **Clarification of site details**

5C. Final Front Elevation Plan – 900 South Road

CDD de Melo summarized the staff report, recommending approval.

There were no questions for staff.

MOTION: By C Wozniak, seconded by C McKenzie, to approve a Resolution adopting a Final

Front Elevation Plan for 900 South Road (Appl. No. 2006-0013)

Ayes: Wozniak, McKenzie, Mercer, Horton, Parsons

Noes: None

Abstain: Frautschi, Mayer

Motion Passed: 5/0/2

6. PUBLIC HEARINGS

6A. PUBLIC HEARING - 1633 Ralston Avenue

To consider a revised Single Family Design Review to add an additional 130 square feet onto a previously approved 3,899 square-foot single-family residence resulting in a total of 4,029 feet, which is below the maximum zoning district permitted 4,500 square feet for this site.

(Appl. No. PA2005-0062) APN: 045-090-580; Zoned: R-1H (Single Family Residential)

CEQA Status: Recommended Categorical Exemption per Section 15303

Applicant: Daniel Biermann Owner(s): Robert and Sophie Luna

CDD de Melo summarized the staff report, recommending approval.

C Wozniak clarified that the proposed design would include 7 bedrooms and that there would be no change in the parking requirement.

C Frautschi clarified the species of three trees being used for mitigation purposes - 2 ash, 1 maple or 1 bay. This to be addressed on final landscape plan.

MOTION: By VC Horton, seconded by C Frautschi, to close the public hearing.

Motion passed by a verbal of 7 ayes.

C Frautschi commented that this was a very large house for a very large piece of property. He suggested on relocating the laundry room near the bedrooms; that this required a more detailed landscape plan; and how do you propose to mitigate the wall along the Ralston corridor; and that this needs more substantial trees with greater height.

C Mercer commented that the house is fine; she has an issue with the front wall considering the “maintenance of the scenic corridor”; suggested screening from the street with a solid hedge or low wall with greenery; this is a visibility hazard backing out.

C Horton commented that the 4 ft wall is plenty low in keeping with a house of that size; this is a busy street and needs a wall; there is a traffic problem on Ralston; that she likes the property; it fits well on Ralston Avenue and that she could support the project “as is”.

C McKenzie commented that he has no objections to the wall.

Chair Parsons commented that he has no problems with the residence, good design and functional; his concern is that it needs a good landscaping plan; maybe step the wall back 5 ft. for visibility; heritage trees are needed (redwood trees, not ash or maple).

C Mayer commented that other residences have much higher walls on the same street.

C Frautschi responded that he opposed the configuration of the wall, not the height; the wall is too boxy.

Chair Parsons commented that to make a safer location, would require moving the wall back 4 ft.

MOTION: By VC Horton, seconded by C Frautschi, to approve a Resolution adopting a

Single-Family Design Review for 1633 Ralston Avenue (Appl. No. 2005-0062)

with these conditions:

· **Final landscape/irrigation plan brought back to the Commission**

- **Heritage trees**
- **Jogging of the wall**

Ayes: Horton, Frautschi, Mayer, McKenzie, Mercer, Wozniak, Parsons

None: None

Motion Passed: 7/0

This item can be appealed to the City Council within 10 calendar days.

6B. PUBLIC HEARING – 850 South Road

To consider a Variance to locate retaining walls and exterior stairs within the required front yard setback. (Appl. No. 2006-0031)

APN: 045-151-240; Zoned: R-1A (Single Family Residential)

CEQA Status: Recommended Categorical Exemption per Section 15302

Applicant/Owner: Colleen Devlin

CDD de Melo summarized the staff report, recommending approval.

C McKenzie clarified the variance info for the stairs into the front setback.

C Frautschi asked about a geo forensics report from Cotton/Shires. CDD de Melo responded that for a smaller project where less grading is proposed, staff did not believe a report from Cotton/Shires was needed.

Chair Parsons clarified the safety railing is designed for the upper wall, only.

C Mercer asked about the parking on the side of the driveway. CDD de Melo responded that the additional paving area created is to alleviate the difficult scenario due to the steepness of the slope which otherwise would require a difficult back down with the speed and site distance issues. This provides space for a three-point turn around.

Colleen Devlin/Greg Rosenthal, Applicant, was in attendance to respond to questions.

C Frautschi asked about draining problem issues. Applicant responded that a drainage plan needs to be provided prior to obtaining a permit.

C Frautschi asked about the future surface of the driveway; asphalt vs. concrete. Applicant responded that it has not been determined at this time. C Frautschi commented that with the slope of the driveway, the use of re-bar with the concrete will avoid the concrete/concrete pavers shifting.

Chair Parsons clarified that the addition to the garage has been abandoned. The applicant confirmed.

Chair Parsons suggested plants along the edge of the wall at the top to drape over the wall, this would allow to cut back on the amount of paving.

C Mercer asked if the applicants plan to park their cars outside the garage and if they will actually use the turn around area. The applicant responded that the garage is actually a 1 ½ car garage, not 2. One car will park in the garage and the other in the driveway. The applicants will most likely back down the driveway as they are used to it. Guests who are terrified of the driveway will most likely use the turn around.

MOTION: By VC Horton, seconded by C Wozniak, to close the public hearing.

Motion passed by a verbal of 7 ayes.

C McKenzie asked about the wrought iron railings; suggesting that there are some better alternatives for maintenance and lower initial costs, suggest for tubular steel powder coated.

C Wozniak asked about replacing the silk trees with heritage trees, especially around the parking pad. This would be more in keeping with the look of Belmont since your house can be seen from the train station.

VC Horton disclosed that she has known the applicant for a long time; the driveway is dangerous; you need more driveway to turn around; and there is no parking on South Road.

C Mercer commented that the concept is great with the extension of the stairs right up to the street. She does have a problem with the retaining wall only being 10 ft back from the street. She says this creates more feeling of a tunnel as you go down the street; other neighbors would want to follow. She would prefer less parking, more natural slope, less fill, and not encroach on the street as much.

C Frautschi commented that by what they are doing it is making the property safer to ingress/egress. His concern is how we mitigate the retaining walls. He agrees that some heritage (oak, bay, buckeye, redwood) trees are needed; mimosa's roots are invasive but are deciduous with no screening part of the year. To minimize the walls, he suggested ficus or creeping fig which would not destroy the walls.

Chair Parsons commented that the driveway is a safety improvement; evergreen trees needed for the landscaping for screening; maybe a redwood along the left side; maybe increase the wall from 2 ft to 3 ft along the driveway.

MOTION: By C Frautschi, seconded by C McKenzie, to adopt a Resolution approving a Variance

at 850 South Road (Appl. No. 2006-0031)

Final Landscape Plan to come back with heritage tree

Ayes: Frautschi, McKenzie, Mayer, Mercer, Wozniak, Horton, Parsons

Noes: None

Motion Passed: 7/0

This item can be appealed to the City Council within 10 calendar days.

6C. PUBLIC HEARING – 325 Marine View Avenue

To consider a Conditional Use Permit and Design Review to replace the existing St. Mark's Church roof with a new redesigned roof that retains the existing cross and includes a reflected cupola addition. (Appl. No. 2006-0017) (Continued from April 18, 2006 meeting)

APN: 040-500-220; Zoned: PD (Planned Development)

CEQA Status: Recommended Categorical Exemption per Section 15301

Applicant: Frank Gonsalves

Owner(s): Roman Catholic Archbishop of San Francisco

CDD de Melo summarized the staff report, recommending approval.

C Wozniak asked about glass samples/materials, previously requested, for the structure on top as well as documenting the current hours of operation. Accordingly to staff, glass samples/materials have not been received. Staff will document hours of operation using a table showing year round events.

C McKenzie agrees with C Wozniak regarding glass samples/materials.

C Frautschi commented that there is no key for the plants. It was necessary to refer to another document for that information which made it more difficult when doing an on-site visit.

VC Horton commented that the plants on the right side are already there. This lawn area is what is being developed. CDD de Melo confirmed that the perimeter plants are there, the new components are the lawn area, the shrine and the 7 trees; the species of trees is not described as staff noted on page 3 of the staff report.

Chair Parsons clarified that the plant materials were to be documented for existing landscaping. CDD de Melo replied that there is a condition for the project to address this issue.

VC Horton asked about on page 2 of the architect's letter regarding the "existing power/light pole could be removed and floodlights installed". CDD de Melo confirmed that there is nothing proposed at this time.

Chair Parsons asked about previous discussions regarding the skylight and proposed changes. CDD de Melo confirmed that there are no changes to the number of skylights or to the roof.

Frank Gonsalves, Applicant, was in attendance to respond to questions. Applicant commented that the landscape plan is intended to be a sketch to see what kind of ideas we could come up with. There was no intention to identify the type of trees, lighting or whatever.

C Frautschi asked about the original landscape plan. Applicant responded that the original plan required the removal of a large weeping willow tree; we wanted to do something else after two years of studying this in lieu of the original landscape plan that was submitted and approved.

C Frautschi asked about the accent paving in the doorways that was not implemented and more than 3000 sq. ft. hardscape added to the driveway. Applicant responded that they changed the walk to save the weeping willow tree and this is what they could do in lieu of what is there now.

Applicant wanted to make a couple statements:

- Modification of the fence surrounding the landscape area – this has been an open area to allow the parishioners an area to walk and congregate - the 3 ft fence will just invite children to climb over that fence
- Roof construction must start immediately – this is a 6 month project and the contractor has not been selected as yet

Chair Parsons clarified the subject of the skylights and how they were too hot to sit under for services. Applicant responded that he had eliminated 12 of them and 2 skylights remain at the perimeter of the church.

Father Al Furtado, pastor, expressed the urgency that the roof be completed before the next rainy season. (He had pictures to pass around.) The safety issue is for the roof and beams to be replaced. Also, on page 3 regarding the wall, we have children using this place, and how do you tell kids not to run. Kids will stumble on that in the evening time, even with lighting.

C Mercer asked if the stained glass that would be used in the cupola is like the stained glass above the doors in this picture. Applicant responded that the stained glass is plastic and will include all the colors.

Patricia Velarde, parishioner, spoke in favor of the project as far as being able to move forward.

Therese Curotto, parishioner, spoke in favor of the project as far as showing pictures of the damaged pews and leaky roof.

Monica Koch, parishioner, spoke in favor of the project as far as needing a new roof before the rains.

MOTION: By C Frautschi, seconded by C Wozniak, to close the public hearing.

Motion passed by a verbal of 7 ayes.

C Frautschi asked about whether the roof has been inspected by a building official. CDD de Melo responded that there have been no reasons for the City to be out there recently for any inspections.

VC Horton clarified that the reason this item is in front of the Planning Commission is because of the roof height. Staff confirmed. A regular roof replacement would not come before the Planning Commission.

Chair Parsons commented that a sample of the colored glass needs to be seen; need an acceptable plan; parking lot visually unacceptable; questions need to be satisfied; more paving is dangerous for kids; drought not a problem.

C Frautschi commented that we need a building inspector to see if the roof is safe; we could approve the roof and then work on the landscaping; the original landscape plan was a sound project; he could not support additional paving; the revised landscape plan is not acceptable; application is incomplete because plants are not yet determined; potential safety hazard by having to cross the driveway to access the lawns and the shrine; the continuous lawn will prevent kids from running into the driveway; the pavers were set up as different colors as a visual safety and transition point; need new landscape plan incorporating the 1998 landscape plan.

C Mayer had no comments.

C Mercer agreed with C Frautschi and commented that the revised landscape plan was not acceptable; the original 1998 landscape plan needs to be implemented which had a provision for a drop-off; considering the financial situation, the parish has made a considerable investment in new pews; she has no trouble with the color of the glass since it will be color coordinated with the existing glass.

VC Horton commented that it is disappointing to have not received the glass sample and the complete landscape plan; suggest to separate off the structural project and tie the final certificate of occupancy to the landscape plan; no additional hardscape; plenty of driveway.

C Wozniak echoes previous statements about the landscape plan; wants to still see the glass samples; document the hours of operation where there are many events that impact the community.

C McKenzie commented about responding to the urgency for a new roof; part 2 will be completed or the building will not be occupied; the 1998 landscape plan should be implemented, keep with the original plan; he does not need to see the glass samples.

Chair Parsons commented that the applicant's track record could be better; wants guarantee on condition of money, bonded to pay for landscape. CDD de Melo responded that the landscape plan needs to be done by a licensed landscape architect; to not allow occupancy is enough impetus; use the certificate of occupancy.

Linda Noeske, Acting City Attorney, commented that through code enforcement, the Conditional Use Permit is enough, then a revocation hearing if they do not comply.

Chair Parsons commented that the sidewalk configuration has changed because of trees; plants changed; we want the basic original plan to be carried out.

C McKenzie commented that he doesn't need to see the sample; it is very difficult for the Commission to evaluate.

MOTION: By VC Horton, seconded by C Frautschi, to adopt a Resolution approving a Conditional Use Permit and Associated Detailed Development Plan and Design Review for 325 Marine View Avenue (Appl. No. 2006-0017)· Document hours of operation - a table showing year round events/uses

- **Actual glass samples (not pictures)**
- **Revised landscape plan (to comeback, submitted, substantially completed)**
- **more trees**
- **no turn around area**
- **shrine area, OK**

- **prior to final building inspection & certificate of occupancy**

Ayes: Horton, Frautschi, McKenzie, Mercer, Wozniak, Parsons

Noes: None

Abstain: Mayer

Motion Passed: 6/0/1

This item can be appealed to the City Council within 10 calendar days.

Break at 9:50pm

Resumed at 9:56pm

7. STUDY SESSION

7A. Downtown Urban Planning - “Transforming El Camino Real” (2ndRound)

CDD de Melo summarized report and slide show presentation and explained about the \$16 million grant available for funding.

C Wozniak commented about the consideration of bike lanes in the planning.

Chair Parsons commented that the concepts are great; the need to recognize the substantial redwoods in the median on the north end of El Camino Real; need CalTrans cooperation.

C Mayer commented merchants acceptance of trees in front of their business; what about business cutting down trees; no Sycamore trees. CDD de Melo responded that merchants have not been polled as yet; the trees are within the public right-of-way; these kinds of improvements will draw more people and act as a catalyst.

Chair Parsons commented that the higher priority is on the west side where businesses are; spend money where the businesses are and not where the parking is.

C Mercer asked if traffic studies show a reduction in accidents; will this slow traffic. CDD de Melo responded that it is not designed to reduce traffic and must pass the approval of the Congestion Management Agency. C Mercer suggested spreading money out to the worst areas of Belmont instead of always working on the Ralston/El Camino Real section.

C Frautschi commented about the need for pedestrian crossing between O’Neil and Broadway because of a restaurant going in; and do we need two left turn lanes going north onto El Camino Real.

Top 3 areas for the grant application:

1. El Camino Real & O’Neill with wide right-of-way – west side of ECR and O’Neill to Harbor
2. Ausiello’s area
3. Blockbuster to Middle Road (west side of El Camino Real)

This item to go before the City Council on June 13th.

8. VERBAL UPDATES

8A. Charles Armstrong School – 1405 Solana Avenue

CDD de Melo commented that the green-screen group has met twice and settled on a new frontage/landscape plan.

8B. Chuck’s Donuts – 641 Ralston Avenue

CDD de Melo commented that code enforcement has started.

8C. Wendy's – 698 Ralston Avenue

CDD de Melo commented that the landscape plan is short 3 trees.

8D. Avanti Pizza Commercial Center – 2040 Ralston Avenue

CDD de Melo commented that the landscape plan is short 1 tree.

PLANNING COMMISSION LIAISON TO CITY COUNCIL

MEETING OF TUESDAY, JUNE 13, 2006.

Liaison: Commissioner McKenzie

Alternate Liaison: Commissioner Mercer

9. ADJOURNMENT:

The meeting was adjourned at 10:48p.m. to a regular meeting on Tuesday, June 20, 2006, at 7:00 pm at Belmont City Hall.